



Research
England

Knowledge Exchange Framework Institutional Context Template

For submission to KEF@re.ukri.org by Friday 29 May 2020

Max words: 500 (plus 120 word lay summary).

Institutional Context narrative statement

Research England contact information – will not be published

Please confirm the main points of contact for Research England to use in the management of the KEF results. Please nominate one single, primary contact. You may also add additional email addresses to be copied into any communications we send.

Institution name	Birmingham City University
UKPRN (www.ukrlp.co.uk)	10007140
KEF primary contact	Professor Julian Beer
Job title	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Email address	julian.beer@bcu.ac.uk
Additional email addresses to be CC'd into any communications	joanna.birch@bcu.ac.uk ; kef@bcu.ac.uk

Contextual information – to be published

Total word limit is 620 words including 120 words for the lay summary and 500 words for the contextual information. Diagrams and images may be included providing they can be extracted for online display and the total narrative (excluding cover page) does not exceed two pages.

Contact point

Email contact (to be published)

Please provide an email address to be published which will act as a general institutional point of contact for anyone seeking more information about the institution's KEF results.

kef@bcu.ac.uk

Summary

Summary

Please provide a short (max 120 words) introduction to your institution. This will be displayed as part of the KEF platform with your KEF results.

[Birmingham City University](#) is a dynamic, anchor institution with over 25,000 students from just under 100 countries, actively engaging with 2,500+ businesses, with 1,425 formally assisted to start, grow or innovate since 2017/18. BCU's mission is to be the University *for* Birmingham, and to work with individuals to enable them to transform their lives and to achieve their potential. Two-thirds of students are from Birmingham and the West Midlands with over half from BAME backgrounds reflecting the University's commitment to inclusivity.

The University also has a growing international profile for its work on [STEAM](#); an interdisciplinary cross-collaborative approach, that combines STEM with Arts, driving innovative solutions to today's challenges.

Further information on BCU's KEF strategy and activity is available [here](#).

Word count: 120

Institutional context

Context

Please provide a brief statement (max 500 words) containing contextual information about the institution that is common across all perspectives. The information provided may be anything that the HEI considers relevant to the KEF such as mission, economic context, institutional strengths, history, or any particular knowledge exchange focus.

Birmingham City University's (BCU) roots date back more than 175 years to the creation of the Birmingham Government School of Design in 1843. This heritage is reflected in its current unique education offering, and status as one of the largest providers of arts education in the UK. The award of the [Queen's Anniversary Prize](#) in 2019, in recognition of the outstanding work of the University's School of Jewellery, emphasises the continuing importance of its practice focus.

Today, BCU comprises [four faculties](#) delivering more than 1,000 courses: Health, Education and Lifesciences; Computing Engineering and the Built Environment; Business, Law and Social Science; and Art Design and Media which incorporates the £57m Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, opened in 2017 and built for the digital age.

BCU places a focus on practice-led education, academic excellence, applied research and innovation, and engagement of business leaders in course design. In terms of [economic impact](#), the University's expenditure stimulates £532m of gross value added contribution to UK GDP; and supports 7,060 jobs nationally through direct employment, supply chain and wage consumption impacts.

BCU's 'University for Birmingham' mission reflects its role as an anchor institution in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, but also as a civic university. It's [2025 Strategy](#) places community at the core of its ambition, whilst the diversity of its student body reflects that of the city, and the emphasis on transforming life opportunities. This place-based outlook has shaped the University's approach to knowledge exchange across all KEF perspective areas, whilst also maintaining a global outlook.

The University's [STEAM](#) agenda, for example, has underpinned new interdisciplinary and collaborative research partnerships; driven open innovation with regional and national businesses and entrepreneurs; facilitated considerable levels of public and community engagement (PCE) through access to facilities and workshops; whilst also making a substantial contribution to local growth and regeneration (LGR).

The University's strong sense of place has ingrained a culture of PCE through research; shaped a position as an active thought leader and innovator in the region playing to its applied and practice based strengths; whilst also promoting culture and learning to a wider audience through a programme of public events, including public lectures, exhibitions, and artistic performances.

BCU actively engages with over 2,500 businesses regionally, nationally and internationally and has extensive sector linkages driving research, collaboration and innovation around identified priority areas and key economic strengths such as smart specialisation, creative and digital, advanced manufacturing, and health and wellbeing, including nursing, midwifery, social work and education. Since 2017/18, 1,425 regional businesses were formally assisted to start, grow or innovate across 11 KE support projects.

BCU's place-based approach has most recently been demonstrated through support for socio-economic recovery from COVID-19. This included direct assistance to keep business moving through the [BCU Advantage](#) business support platform; [300 nurses](#) taking up positions within the

NHS to support the nation-wide effort; creation of an AI tool to speed up diagnosis; development of a world-first COVID Digital Safety Certificate; and the creation of a 1,000 strong volunteering group to support communities.

Word count: 500